

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, April 24. 1707.

I Am tracing the Dissenters in *England* to their true Original, which I have plac'd in the impolitick Contrivances of a Party to drive them from the Church: This has unhappily thrown in my way a Thing, I had rather should be bury'd in Silence, as the Shame and Reproach of those Times, I mean, *the Book of Sports*, which was first set on Foot by King *James I.* and after reviv'd in the Reign of his unfortunate Son.

The first Ecclesiastical Violence founded on this wicked Basis, was the Bishops enjoying the Clergy to read it in their Pulpits.

I confess, it has been often Matter of Wonder to me, the Clergy had no more Cunning at that Time; for let them be what else they will, we have seldom found them Fools, and generally speaking, when any Work was to be done, which would bring

Danger or Difficulty with it, the Clergy us'd to shift it off from themselves.

But here lies the very Mystery, and this will unfold the horrid Clue, and convince the World, the Dissenters did not scrupulously quit their Communion with the Church for Trifles and indifferent Things, but were furiously and violently driven out of it, by imposing that upon them, which no serious Christian could or ought to comply with to save his Life.

I cannot have so little Charity, but to believe of the present Clergy of the Church of *England*, that if a Proclamation to license the prophaning the Lords-Day should be offer'd them to read in the Churches, and thereby make themselves accessory to the monstrous Crime, there are Hundreds of them so conscientious, so zealous for Reformation, and so sincerely pious, they would

would suffer any thing, rather than comply with it.

Upon the forcing this Crime, imposing the Reading this horrid Book in Defiance of God's Command, to sanctifie the Sabbath, or Man's Conscience in observing it, Abundance of the best Ministers of the Church of England were depriv'd of their Livings, turn'd out of their Pulpits, and left to seek their Bread, and thus they became Dissenters; others, who had quitted the Ceremonies in Quest of a greater Purity of Worship, and were therefore call'd Puritans, joyning with these, they all embrac'd the same Term, and so every one that could not sacrifice his Conscience to the Prophanes and abominable Debauchery of the Times, were cast out of the Church—— Thus I say, 'tis apparent, they were driven out of the Church, they did not wilfully separate on frivolous and weak Pretences, but were forc'd out on justifiable Scruples, and such as would now make Dissenters of many hundreds of the present Church of England Members, as well Ministers, as People.

I might enter into the History of that strange Monster of Religious Politicks, *the Book of Sports*, an Original of which I have by me, and perhaps I could rip up some Faults of some People, who are long since gone to answer for it in another Place. But I am not at work to renew, but to bury old Mistakes; I am upon the Head of reconciling, not widening our Breaches, and therefore I throw a Vail over the Disasters of thole Times.

Soon after these things, the unnatural and terrible Wars here began, and the Parliament Party prevailing, the Episcopal Government, together with the Habits, Ceremonies, and Pomp of Worship, went down at once, and the victorious People triumphing over their Prince, with him, dethron'd Episcopacy, and set up Presbyterian Discipline.

I shall not give a succinct History of Fact, there is no need of that here; being but just touching the Heads, upon the Restoration

Episcopacy return'd, and the *Regale* usher'd in the *Pontificate*, the Bishops and all the *Catera's* of the Church of England was restor'd, and then the other Party became Dissenters again.

King Charles II. appointed a Conference at the *Savoy* to see, if (say some) the Presbyterians could be brought to conform; others say, it was only a putting a fair Gloss on the Matter, to have the better Pretence to suppress them.

Here they again shew'd their Unwillingness to separate from the general Body, and some of them went so far, that Advantage is now taken of it to tell them, they are Episcopally enclin'd: But all would not do, Conforming was not the Design; not drawing them in, but driving them out of the Church, and resolving to abate nothing, above 3000 Ministers were silenc'd, and depos'd in the Kingdom of England in one Day.

And here began the Article now in Debate call'd Dissenting, for the Ministers seeing themselves silenc'd at once, and so hardly and unjustly dealt with, and the People folliciting them, resolv'd, that it was their Duty not to abandon their Flocks at the Command of Men, and whereas they were straighly charg'd with the Apostle *to preach no more in that Name*, they answer'd with the same Apostle, *whether it be right in the Sight of GOD, to obey GOD rather than Man, judge ye?*

Upon this they gather'd Churches, set up separate Congregations, and being Ministers rightly ordain'd, they made no Scruple to administer all Ordinances of Worship.

This the Grievance! It remains to see, whether the Cause lies in the imposing intolerable and unjustifiable Burthen, or in the refusing them and setting themselves free.

The End of all this is to come at the true Difference between all Sorts of British Protestants; how easie to be reconcil'd, and how a little Charity would cure it all——

MISCELLANEA.

I Am sorry, my Distance from the Town makes this Discourse so late, I do not love to speak any thing out of its Time.

I observe, great Complaints have been made against a late Act for the preventing Frauds committed by Bankrupts, and that Amendments and Explanations are made to the Bill: I cannot learn yet of what Sort, but it seems, some Gentlemen are mightily disappointed, that the Bill is not wholly repealed; Abundance of Cheats, they say, haven practis'd, and yet I hear no Body indicted for giving in false Accounts, and making imperfect Surrenders.

Indeed this Way of clamouring down A&ts of Parliament has been a too successful Practice, and the Act for two thirds in Number and Value was so lost, tho' the best A&t that ever England saw on that Head; a full Demonstration that 'tis not a good Law, but no Law to Creditors, that these People would have.

This Law for Bankrupts, say they, has deliver'd a great many Rogues, a great many Cheats have been practis'd, Frauds, Briberies, &c. practis'd, and Piskin's Case is trump't up upon the Clamour of it———I know but little of the Case, and am perfectly a Stranger to both Mr. B———d and Him, and that I know of, never saw them in my Life———But what's that to the Law we are upon, that Case has no Relation to it, nor are any of the Proceedings grounded upon it, or were the Creditors ever restrain'd in any thing by it; of which I shall say more hereafter.

But if there are so many Frauds committed by Bankrupts, who have claim'd the Benefit of this A&t; if the Complaints are true, why is there no Prosecution at Law yet, why no Indictments at the Old Bailey, why no Bankrupt brought to the Gallows yet, as by the A&t is provided?

I can give the World an Account of several Snares laid for the Lives of the distressed Bankrupt, where attempting to bring them into the literal Sense of the A&t. to swear

they have made a perfect Surrender, without allowing the Latitude in which all Oaths ought to be taken: If half-a-Crown had been due to the Bankrupt, which he had not given in, tho' innocently forgot, and no willful designing Concealment intended, the poor Man should have been brought upon the Stage for his Life, and yet the Circumspection and Honesty of the Person has prevented them.

So bloody, so barbarous is the Nature of some Men, so tender are Creditors to their Debtors in this Age, GOD Almighty grant them more Mercy, when they come to account for the *ten thousand Talents* they owe in another Place, and which they are far less able to pay, than the meanest Bankrupt in the Nation——

For my Part, I know no A&t in the World, which the Debtor can be more particularly purg'd in, or more severely treated on a Miscarriage, than this; and I canot guess, what any Creditor can desire, *less than Blood*, of his Debtor, that this A&t does not furnish him with.

What the Amendments made to it are, I yet know not, and therefore cannot say much to it; perhaps there may yet be a Time, when it may come to be spoken to more seasonably; but this I may say to it now, that as the Noise has been hitherto the number of Bankrupts claiming Relief by it, which the *Gazett* has been throng'd with; To hereafter I doubt not, we shall see it proportionably fill'd with the Advertisements of Creditors summoning the Debtor to a Surrender upon his Peril, and these things begin to appear already.

How Creditors and Commissioners will use Men, that they first compel to come in, and after expect a literal Oath from, on the Hazard of their Lives, I want exceedingly to know, being well assur'd, no Man can safely swear it, and the honestest Man in the World may by it be spur'd out of his Life; a thing, I am satisfy'd, the Parliament never design'd in it, and a thing, I have great Reason

son to say, many a Creditor has demonstrated, they desire— Of which I shall be larger in my next.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

PROPOSALS, for Restoring the Ancient Trade of Herring, and other Fishing in ENGLAND, are preparing for the Press, whereby every Adventurer will in all probability reap 60, 80, or it may be Cent. per Cent. every Year for his Mony. If any Gentlemen are dispos'd to contribute their Thoughts, to the recovering this peculiar and proper National Trade, the Proposer may be spoke with at the Three Tuns in Fetter Lane, from 5 to 6 in the Afternoon, this present 24th of April; and will gratefully accept any offers that may further the same. The Season drawing on.

Preparing for the Press, and great Part of it finished,

A Compleat HISTORY OF THE UNION. The Work will contain about 250 Sheets in Folio, to be finish'd in six Months from the UNION: Being an Account of all the fruitless Attempts made in former Times for Uniting these Kingdoms, with a particular Account of all the Transactions of the present Treaty, the many Contrivances and vigorous Oppositions against it, both in England and Scotland, whether within the Parliament or without.

Extracted out of the original Records, Registers, Journals, and other Authorities in both Kingdoms.

With an Appendix,
Containing an Abridgement of all the Alterations made in the Laws, Trade, Customs and Constitution of both Kingdoms by the UNION.

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These are to give Notice.

THAT MARY KIRLEUS, the Widow of JOHN KIRLEUS, Son of Dr. THOMAS KIRLEUS, a Sworn-Physician, in ordinary to King Charles II. Sells (rightly prepar'd) his Famous Drink and Pills; experienc'd above 50 Years to cure all Ulcers, Sores, Scabs, Itch, Scurf, Scurvies, Leprosies, Running of the Reins, and the most inveterate VENEREAL Disease, with all its attending Symptoms, without Fluxing, Confinement, or destructive Mercurial Preparations: These incomparable Medicines need no Words to express their Virtues; the many miserable Ones that have been happily cured, after given over by others, sufficiently recommend them as the most Sovereign Remedy in the World against all such Malignities: She cures many after Fluxing, and in Compassion to the distressed, will deal according to the Patient's Ability. The Drink is 3s. the Quart, the Pill 1s. the Box with Directions, and Advice Gratis.

++ She lives at the Golden-Ball in Hand-Court, over against great Turnstile in Holborn.

THE Planet Mercury, being to pass under the Sun, this present 24th of April, which will be an appearance of great consequence in Astronomy; all Persons of Skill, and provided with Instruments to observe it, are desir'd to attend, to see him enter on the Sun a little before Sun set, or if he be not then visible, to expect his going off from the Sun's Disk at his rising next Morning. J. Matthews, in Little-Britain, will receive all Letters without Charge to you.